

endure them without harm. They plunged into changeful and wearing life, in which exhaustive study, the duties of a household tutor, a secretary, or a professor, service near a prince, deadly hostility and danger, enthusiastic admiration and extravagant scorn, excess and poverty, followed each other in confusion. The humanist needed to know how to carry a great erudition and to endure a succession of various positions and occupations. To these were added on occasion stupefying and disorderly enjoyment, and when the basest demands were made on him he had to be indifferent to all morals. Haughtiness was a certain consequence in character. The humanists needed it to sustain themselves, and the alternation of flattery and hatred strengthened them in it. They were victims of subjectiveness. The admiration of classical antiquity was so extravagant and mistaken that all the humanists were subject to excessive suggestion which destroyed their judgment.¹

722. "Individualism." Recent writers on the period have emphasized the individualism which was produced. By this is meant the emancipation of men of talent from traditional morality, and the notion that any man might do anything which would win success for his purposes. There was no grinding of men down to an average.² This code was very widely applied in statecraft and social struggles. A smattering of knowledge of Plutarch, Plato, and Virgil furnished heroic examples which could justify anything.³ Machiavelli's *Prince* was only a text-book of this school of action for statesmen. Given the existing conditions in Italy, he assumed a man of ability and asked how he should best act. "He said that, to such a man, undertaking

such a task, moral considerations were of subsidiary importance, and success was the one criterion by which he was to be judged. The conception was one forced on him by the actual facts of Italian history in his own time. The methods which he codified were those which he saw being actually employed."⁴ Gobineau⁵

¹ Burckhardt, *Renaissance*, 268-271.

³ Symonds, *Renaissance*, I, 423.

⁸ Gauthiez, *Lorenzaccio*, 71.

⁴ Creighton, *Hist. Essays and Reviews*, 336.

⁵ *La Renaissance*, 377.